

close friend who I could hang out with and gab about philosophy, somebody who was an advisor and when needed, a fellow mischief-maker. Gradually, I got to see and know all about the famous Sweetback movie and his other films and I read and saw his plays, especially *Ain't Supposed to Die a Natural Death* and *Don't Play us Cheap*, two of the ones I think are among the great works of American literature. *Waltz of the Stork*, a musical I backed, was not one of the great works. Otherwise I would be rich today. But we reflected on a lot more plays, too, including the Bessie Smith piece called the *Champ* that we argued about for five years and still have to make.

Close friends sometimes disagree—we solved that by making bets. One bet he lost made him work for me on Wall Street for a year during which he became the first Black trader on the American Stock Exchange. Not surprisingly, he wrote a book about it as he does about almost anything he does. That book, called *Bold Money*, introduced many nonprofessionals to the world of security option trading. He always writes books about what he does. He makes movies about the making of movies and he writes books about the "making of the making of a movie" movie. Happily, all of this piques his viewers' and readers' interest and makes him a bunch of money.

But he's made a lot more than movies, plays, and money. He has made a number of wonderful children, all of whom I've had the pleasure of hanging out with over the years, Megan, Mario, Max, and maybe more. Megan has the beauty and the wonderful heart she had when she worked at *Mocatta* and Mario has become a distinguished motion picture actor and director himself. Very few people know that one of the steps of his professional life, maybe the step that taught him all there was to learn about acting before he went to Hollywood was working as a gold trader for me at a company called *Mocatta*.

The Van Peebles children have been friends of my children and Melvin himself has helped each of my children, most recently my son Eugene, who made a film called *The Opponent* based loosely on Eugene's early life friendship with Mike Tyson. Melvin's most recent French film, *A Belly Full*, was not the reason for this Legion of Honor award but was its occasion.

Even before making a great name in America, Melvin had become well-known in France, partly for his book and movie, *Story of a Three-Day Pass* which had won many awards there, and throughout his life he has remained an American bridge to France, even having one French son, Max, who has helped him work on many of his movies. And so this clearly American icon has gradually become a French figure of the arts as well.

We are all honored to be here tonight with Melvin Van Peebles to help celebrate his receiving this award from Consul-General Richard Duque who honors us with his presence. I personally have in my own very modest film-making career achieved only one thing: when I, following in Melvin's footsteps, was making a movie about Cuban music in Havana with my friend Gary Keys, I managed to buy some Cuban cigars and also a wonderfully appropriate humidifier in which to keep them. And so, Melvin, I take pleasure in presenting you with this unusual-looking humidifier and the accompanying box of Cuban cigars. If you choose to give some of these cigars out to some of your guests here, feel free to do so: I have a second one upstairs. And those who worry about smoking Cuban cigars—and I'm not one—can always say the words of Melvin's friend Pat Leahy, the Senator from Vermont, who tells us that he cannot be criticized for burning Castro's crops.

Thank you all for coming. •

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Evans, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

ENROLLED JOINT RESOLUTION SIGNED

At 2:41 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled joint resolution:

H.J. Res. 70. A joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2002, and for other purposes.

The enrolled joint resolution was signed subsequently by the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bills were read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

H.R. 1552. An act to extend the moratorium enacted by the Internet Tax Freedom Act through 2006, and for other purposes.

S. 1572. A bill to authorize the provisions of educational and health care assistance to the women and children of Afghanistan.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, which were referred as indicated:

EC-4507. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to an arrangement with the United Nations regarding the reciprocal debt forgiveness contemplated by the legislation; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM-200. A resolution adopted by the Senate of the General Assembly of the State of Rhode Island relative to maintaining the public institutions status of D.C. General Hospital; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

SENATE RESOLUTION

Whereas, D.C. General Hospital, a 108-year-old health care facility located in our na-

tion's capital, will stop operating as a full-service public hospital as a result of the Mayor of Washington, D.C.'s plan to privatize the hospital, eliminating a safety net for thousands of disadvantaged people who otherwise would not have access to basic health care services; and

Whereas, D.C. General Hospital is a major trauma center and plays an indispensable role in providing quality and affordable health care to the 100,000 under and uninsured residents of the city. Additionally, the hospital is only one of two health care facilities in the Washington, D.C. area with a Level III neo-natal unit, treating 1,000 premature and critically ill infants a year; and

Whereas, Concerns over the possible closing of the hospital and the move to change its public institution status have generated opposition from numerous observers throughout the country, including health care officials, representatives of medical organizations, community activists and policymakers who feel that D.C. General Hospital represents this country's commitment to providing health care services to the residents of its inner cities; and

Whereas, D.C. General Hospital should continue to operate as a fully-funded public hospital in order to provide lifesaving health care services to Washington, D.C.'s poor and uninsured: Now, therefore be it

Resolved, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations hereby urges the Congress of the United States to maintain the public institution status of D.C. General Hospital so it can continue to operate as a fully funded public hospital, provide lifesaving health care services to Washington, D.C.'s poor and uninsured and represent this country's commitment to providing health care services to the residents of its inner cities; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of State be and he hereby is authorized and directed to transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the United States Secretary of Health and Human Services, the presiding officers of the United States Senate and House of Representatives and the entire Rhode Island congressional delegation.

POM-201. A joint resolution adopted by the General Assembly of the State of Rhode Island relative to imposing a moratorium on major airline industry mergers; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

JOINT RESOLUTION

Whereas, Economic development and prosperity are dependent upon a competitive airline industry providing reasonable rates, access, and efficient services for the transportation of people and goods; and

Whereas, Competition in the airline industry will be drastically reduced if pending mergers are allowed to proceed without comment from consumer, business, and labor organizations; and

Whereas, Airline industry competition is essential to keeping prices reasonable and service satisfactory for consumers and business travelers, and lack of competition will cause longer delays in air travel and decreased customer service; and

Whereas, These merger proposals will inevitably lead to further consolidation in the airline industry. This consolidation will decrease service and access in certain markets and localities, and hinder or prevent new low-cost airline carrier's entrance into the market; and

Whereas, The United States Congress and Departments of Justice and Transportation are examining the proposed airline mergers: Now, therefore be it

Resolved, That this General Assembly of the State of Rhode Island and Providence